



**For Immediate Release
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**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
ISSUES WILDFIRE ADVISORY AFTER SECOND-DRIEST MARCH ON RECORD**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today issued a public wildfire advisory due to the lack of recent rainfall and an increase in the number of reported fires throughout the state.

According to the National Weather Service, this month will end as the driest and least snowy March in southern New England since 1915. Total precipitation for the month has been measured at .56 inches in Boston, compared to an annual average of 3.86 inches.

“As we enter April, typically the month in which forest fire danger is the highest, this continued dry phase is of serious concern for the state’s forest firefighters and community fire departments,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “We urge visitors to state forests and parks to exercise the greatest caution while enjoying recreational pursuits and to be conscious of the dry conditions and wind when burning forestry debris.”

Should no significant rainfall occur, DCR will consider placing a ban on open fire burning in all communities across the state. Commissioner Burrington added, “As the legal season for permitted open burning nears its end, several factors, such as heavier winds, will make open burns even more likely to accidentally start a forest fire. Conditions may make it too risky to allow open burning.” Permitted open burning ends on May 1, 2006.

Massachusetts promotes the third full week of April as Forest Fire Awareness Week to encourage its citizenry to have an increased awareness of the dangers posed by forest fire. This year, Forest Fire Awareness week will begin April 16.

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